

CASE STUDY

## Creative positioning boosts hospital brand preference from 20% to 60%.

Vassar Brothers Hospital | Branding

Who knew that world-class medicine was available in the mid-Hudson Valley? Driven by clever, unexpected creative messaging that cut through regional media clutter, our repositioning of Vassar Brothers Hospital attracted patients from surrounding areas who previously traveled to major tertiary centers instead. Service line campaigns resulted in rapid growth in several key areas; building trust for their new cardiothoracic surgery program, establishing the cancer program as the preferred provider in the region and successfully introducing the new birthing center before it opened. The work tripled preference shares from 20% to 65% in just three years and was recognized by advertising's most prestigious awards, including The One Show, Healthcare Advertising Awards and London International Awards.

325%  
INCREASE  
in  
BRAND  
PREFERENCE  
SHARE





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## Diagnosis

When they hired Smith & Jones, Vassar Brothers Hospital was one of two community hospitals in Poughkeepsie, surrounded by several other community hospitals in contiguous communities and four major tertiary centers (Westchester Medical Center to the South, Albany Med to the North, Hartford and Yale New Haven to the East), each within easy driving distance.

While Vassar commanded 60% market share in Poughkeepsie, there was huge opportunity if they could become the preferred hospital to doctors and patients from outside Poughkeepsie who chose to go elsewhere.

## Prescription

Our research showed that it was widely perceived that Vassar Brothers' administration was far more committed to building a quality organization than its community competitors. They had successfully recruited a number of high profile physicians to practice in Poughkeepsie, where they could have a greater impact on the organization and their patients' care than at larger, urban centers (where they would have been one of many). Using our hospital branding expertise, we discovered the opportunity to reposition Vassar Brothers as a place that delivers world class medicine, in the most unlikely of places.



EXCEEDED  
SURGERY VOLUME  
GOALS  
IN FIRST YEAR

A.M., and the  
A.A.H., were senten-  
to seven years in prison  
for making explosives and  
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the accused, A.M., and sev-  
eral others, A.A.H., were  
handed out the fifth  
(A.A.H.) one year in jail

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3 Brain tumor print ad

4 Cancer Center print ads

5 "Big Jake" Heart Institute [TV spot](#)

## Treatment

The creative expression of this positioning included bold statements like "Expect Something Wonderful", "Exceptional Heart Surgery, No Exceptions", "Introducing from left to right: Hope, Hope and Hope" and "We just operated on her inoperable brain tumor."

The first service line campaign introduced Vassar Brothers' new cardiothoracic surgery program. Before statistical results, before word-of-mouth endorsements, our simple, honest campaign built credibility and trust for the heart program. A bold cancer campaign helped to establish Vassar Brothers as the preferred provider in the region. And the maternity campaign successfully introduced Vassar Brothers' new birthing center, without benefit of facility tours or photos.

## Post-Op

The ROI from our work with Vassar Brothers touched many service lines:

- Preference share for the brand skyrocketed from 20% to over 65% in three short years
- Cardiothoracic surgery volume exceeded goals in the first year of the new program
- Specialty areas throughout the medical center saw significant increases in volume
- Labor & delivery achieved 100% census within a month of the new wing opening
- Births increased from 1,900 to 2,800 in a single year

**Research showed Vassar Brothers was perceived as more committed to quality care, so we repositioned VBH as a place that delivers world class medicine in the most unlikely of places.**



### Awards:

SILVER PENCIL

The One Show

GOLD

Healthcare Advertising Awards

GOLD

London International Awards